

Moulsham Junior School

Past Pupils' Newsletter

Autumn 2001

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In this issue

page

- Autumn Term 2001 - a new school year begins 2
- Notes from the Head Teacher, Mr L R Kemp 3
- Changes to the school building 3
- So who was Mr Turner, then? 4
- John Spooner, "war guest" in Canada 6
- Wartime in Chelmsford, by Brian Emmett 7
- Adrian Smith 1948-52 8
- Mr Gardiner's Diamond Wedding 9
- Stories and songs at the Junior Girls' School 1951-55 10
- Graham and June King: Moulsham in the 1950s 11
- Class of 1964, by Anne Waters 12
- Music, Archaeology and Science, by Barrie Stevens 14
- News in brief 15

Autumn Term 2001 - a new school year begins

Do you remember starting a clean page in your school exercise books for each term, neatly headed Autumn Term, Spring Term or Summer Term, plus the appropriate year? I wonder if they still do that nowadays? Anyway, welcome to the Autumn 2001 Past Pupils' Newsletter, and many thanks to all of you who have sent in news, memories, photos and articles. Do keep writing to us, please, and sending addresses for the mailing list (currently over 335). We are always delighted to hear from you, whenever you were at Moulsham Juniors.

Missing photos

Good news! During the building works over the summer (see Mr Kemp's notes on the next page), a quantity of photos and other display items came to light, which had been missing since the 60th Anniversary Reunion in March 1999. Some of the photos have names on the back, and we are now in the process of returning them to their rightful owners, with apologies for the long delay. But others give no clue to their ownership. So if you happen to remember that you lent the school a photo for that occasion, please get in touch as soon as possible, so we can identify it and return it to you.

Also among the missing material were cards left by past pupils and staff recalling details of their school life and asking about friends they would like to contact. From these cards we have been able to add about half a dozen new names to our mailing list, including Maureen Healy, who was a teacher at Moulsham Juniors from 1975-86, and was delighted to learn about our Newsletter. We look forward to meeting Maureen in the near future, and plan to include her recollections in the next issue.

2002 Open Afternoon

Next summer may seem a long way off, but I know some of your 2002 diaries are already filling up. So do please make a note now of the date of the next Past Pupils' Open Afternoon: **Saturday 18th May, from 1-5pm** at the school. We look forward to seeing many of you there, with some familiar faces, and others joining us for the first time. We should also be very pleased to hear from any of you who live locally, who would be willing to help set up memorabilia displays on the afternoon of Friday 17th May, or put out tables and chairs for refreshments at 12.30 on the day, or join a rota to transport supplies of cups and saucers between the kitchen and the Hall. All offers gratefully received.

E-mail distribution

Our experiment in distributing the Summer Newsletter by e-mail to those whose addresses we had was more or less successful. Just a few did not arrive first go, and to my consternation one gentleman who was not on my list at all managed to receive a copy by mistake(!), but we hope all teething troubles have now been resolved, and that distribution this time will go smoothly. So far, only 22 of you have admitted to having e-mail addresses - we feel certain there must be at least a few more, so please do let us know. It all helps reduce copying and distribution time and costs. We are hoping that by the next issue, the school's own web site may be up and running (I understand December is the latest target date). If so, the plan is to have the Newsletter posted on the web site. All I should then need to do is e-mail you to draw your attention to each new issue when it appears.

Contact address

As ever, letters, photos and articles can be sent to me at 1A Vicarage Road, Chelmsford, CM2 9PG, or by e-mail to kathleen.boot@virgin.net I will scan in photos sent by post, and return originals at once.

Happy reading

Kathleen Boot (nee Nash)
1951-55

Notes from the Head Teacher, Mr L R Kemp

It was touch and go if we would be ready to start the new term on time as the major building project to replace the North Wing Walkway was far from finished with two days to go. The fact we did open on time was due to the Herculean efforts of the builders, caretakers, cleaning staff and teachers. The difference the new walkway has made to us is evident in that we now have a surplus pile of buckets which we previously used to catch the water along the walkway every time it rained.

However on the first occasion it rained this term the new carpet got soaked where the new window units had not been properly sealed. We will now exchange a pile of buckets for a squeeze mop.

The awarding by the Central Bureau of the International School Award to this school was greeted with delight. Widening our children's horizons is an important part of the work we have developed over the last few years beginning with our link with the Japanese School. Our partner links with schools in Tanzania and Ghana have developed after initial difficulties but having secured a European Union Comenius Grant we were very disappointed that our other partner schools in Germany, Italy and Romania did not obtain grant funding approval so our own grant approval is null and void.

We have begun a project teaching French to Year 5 and again we are grateful to the Anglo European School for funding and support for this project. I now serve on the Languages Strategy Working Party for Essex Learning Services and with the serious shortage of Foreign Language teachers and the almost impossible task of finding curriculum time in primary school, as a country, the poor level of foreign language skills will continue for the foreseeable future.

We continue to award the Turner prize annually (see article on page 4). The two recipients of the award are voted for by the other Year 6 children and this year the award went to Claire Lewis and Michael Hayes. Enthusiastic participation in school activities and a caring attitude to others are the main criteria for allocating the award.

The many donations we have received from past pupils have allowed us to continue to produce and distribute the termly newsletter to so many recipients. We are also in the process of using donations to purchase a fountain for our pond and some maths equipment.

I have had the thrill of reading many of the past school magazines that have now come to light and which the Past Pupil Association have copies of. There is in those publications evidence of many school activities that have now disappeared. We are trying to recreate one by applying for tickets to take the children to a schools' performance by the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden, which I used to do but have not for several years.

Changes to the school building

Right is a photo of the Junior Schools in 1938, when they opened. As well as the improvements to the interior Walkways (Verandas) mentioned in Mr Kemp's report above, the former Girls' School (right of the main entrance) now has smart new replacement windows, the same size but slightly different in appearance, and distinctly less draughty, we understand.



So who was Mr Turner, then?

Most of us know vaguely that Mr William Chandos Cowper Turner ("Uncle T" to hundreds of the Junior Boys) was a generous friend and benefactor to the Moulsham Junior Schools. We have heard of the annual "Turner Awards" for Sportsmanship (boys) and Good Companionship (girls) in the days when the two schools were separate. The present combined school still makes a Turner Award every year to a girl and boy who have contributed significantly to the life of the school, selected by vote of the year 6 (top year) pupils (see page 3). Some past pupils from the 1940s and 50s will remember Mr Turner, by then an elderly gentleman, coming to the school to present these awards. Ken Turton recalls that Mr Turner also paid for trips to Danbury Common for Nature Talks, and in 1945 for all the top year boys to see the Laurence Olivier film of Henry V. He is responsible, too, for the trees planted along the road to the Senior School in memory of the Mayor of Chelmsford, Alderman J O Thompson, killed when a lone raider jettisoned its bombs on the town in October 1940.

We are reminded in the 1948 Souvenir edition of the boys' school magazine that the Honours Boards in the Boys' School Hall (now the North Hall) were also the gift of Mr Turner in April 1942. Mr Viv Hodgson, who had joined the staff in 1941, designed the centre panel, with the school motto "Work and be happy". Some of these panels remain in place. Others are stored in the attic, and were on display at this year's Open Afternoon, including the list of the first recipients of the Turner Sportsmanship Awards:

1939: Kenneth Harris
1940: Raymond Hinsley
1941: John Whittle
1942: Donald Post
1943: Peter Tarry
1944: Anthony Farrow
1945: Donald Courtman
1946: Geoffrey Piper
1947: Michael Wright
1948: Wilson McLean
1949: Colin Wright
1950: Tony Raven

*Right: photo of
Mr Turner from
Derek Weston,
(1942-46), who
continued to
hear from
Mr Turner until
at least 1959.*



The Moulsham Boys' School "Turner Awards" transferred from Trinity School when Mr Petchey and many other staff and pupils transferred to the new Moulsham School in 1938. Margaret Haldane, nee Laurence, tells us that the Moulsham Girls' "Good Companionship" award started in 1944, and she was the first recipient.

Also in 1942, Mr Turner presented the Junior Boys School with fifty books, forming the nucleus of a "Turner Library" (120 books by 1948 and no doubt more as the years went by). The Boys' School pupil librarians were known as the "Turner Librarians" in his honour. We have not yet discovered whether a similar gift was made to the Girls' School.

But what do we know about Mr Turner as a person? We can build up a sketchy picture of his later years from your recollections: a bachelor, diabetic, florid complexion, wore spats, and occasionally a pince-nez with a black ribbon. In winter, he wore fingerless mittens, and sometimes two overcoats! He lived in Galleywood for many years, and enjoyed growing artichokes. Later on, he liked to watch football from his house at 50 New Writtle Street. We know that his generosity extended to other

Chelmsford schools, including the Technical High School, now Chelmer Valley High School. He also devoted his energies to the welfare of young people generally, supporting organisations such as the Scout Movement, and sent photos, birthday cards and Christmas cards to a large number of individuals. His Christmas mail was said to be the largest in Chelmsford.

Probably less well known to Moulsham pupils was Mr Turner's tremendous energy and sense of adventure as a younger man, his abiding interest in lighting and electricity, and his long career with Crompton's in Writtle Road. Born in or around 1879, he joined the company as a young man in 1898, and although officially retired in 1940, still attended the Works right up to 1960. Here too, his generosity was much in evidence, including the gift of a set of instruments to each new apprentice at Cromptons. In an article for the Cromptonian Association Journal in 1933, Mr Turner recalls that his interest in anything and everything electrical went back as far as Queen Victoria's Jubilee year, 1887, when he was first taken to see some temporary illuminations at a country house. Seven years later, still a schoolboy, he obtained permission to spend his evenings at an electric lighting station in a small country town. Sometimes he was even left in charge of the highly temperamental machinery while the two engineers popped out illegally to the pub. By now, the young William Turner was totally engrossed in the new lighting technology, and applied successfully for a job in the Arc Lamp Department at Crompton's. He describes his group as a happy, hardworking squad, working cheerfully from 6am to 5.30pm most of the year, plus 6pm to 10pm overtime in the autumn "when technical classes permitted". And we think people nowadays are workaholics!

Mr Turner's early years at Crompton's provided him with many adventures and memories. In 1901 he was Crompton's Arc Lamp Expert, and tells the following story. "I still looked on Scotland as a beautiful land of deer forests and kilted men, and was rather thrilled to be ordered to go to Govan - I'd never heard of it, except as the name of an order for lamps - on December 31st to start up the street lighting there. I only had time for a cursory examination before lighting-up time when the streets were packed with people, mostly apparently Irish, drinking and the worse for drink. Accompanied by the Assistant Engineer, we made our way with difficulty through the throng, till one drunken Irishman thought he recognised in me someone who had done him out of a shilling in a "Clutha" - little boats plying on the Clyde in those days - and offered to fight. Eventually I had to fight, while my companions tried to find the police. I got my man down, and sat on him, but his womenfolk clawed my collar and tie, and some of my hair off trying to effect a rescue. Patrick Devine was fined 40 shillings or 14 days in my presence next day. My ideas of Bonnie Scotland had changed!"

Another anecdote, this time illustrating the importance Mr Turner attached to courtesy and good manners, comes from Mr John Jay, former apprentice at Cromptons and now historian of the Old Cromptonians. Apparently, the Managing Director of a large firm in London telephoned one day asking Mr Turner to visit, which he did. Arriving for the appointment, Mr Turner knocked on the door, only to hear a loud voice shout "Get out!" He returned immediately to Chelmsford in disgust. For Mr Turner, polite and correct behaviour was an obligation on those at the top just as much as on the lowliest employee.

For those who only knew Mr Turner in his seventies or eighties, if at all, it is interesting to learn of this other side of his life, and to see his generosity to the Moulsham Schools as part of a wider picture. When he died on 23rd July 1962, aged about 83, it was a loss to the community as a whole. Thank you to all those who have helped with research for this article. Do let us know if you have any other stories, memories or insights to add.

John Spooner: war guest in Canada

John Spooner (1938-40) shared some of his memories of Moulsham in our first issue. The following is an extract from some further recollections he has sent. "Pre war, in Bouverie Road, no one owned a car, a refrigerator, central heating, telephone - the only car seen in the road was the egg man on Wednesday and the oil man on Saturday. We played happily in the road - football, cricket, and fixing a rope to the arms of the one lamppost to use as a swing! Another game which alternated was bowling a hoop along one year and whips and tops the next. A very pleasurable experience was on a Wednesday dinner time: I would run from school to Mr Howe's hairdressers on Baddow Road. He would give me the shop key for my mother to clean the shop whilst they were shut for the afternoon. Also he gave me two pence for myself. On the way home I stopped at the first sweet shop. Then it was decision time: should I buy two Milky Ways or one Mars Bar? These I ate on my way home to Bouverie Road, to be greeted by my Mum and, more to the point, my very favourite dinner, which consisted of a large plate of mashed potatoes topped with a delicious fried egg. Some times as a special treat, if Mum could afford it, she would take me to the pictures after school. Happy days!"

In July 1940, with just seven days' notice, John went to Winnipeg, Canada, as a 'war guest', and spent the next five years away from his family. He treated the episode as a great adventure, and was happy there despite missing his parents and brothers and sisters. When he was eleven, John was one of 17 British war guests invited to speak to their parents by transatlantic radio during a Children Calling Home broadcast arranged by the BBC, NBC and Canadian Broadcasting authorities. John has sent us this photo from a press cutting about the occasion, when he was able to speak to his father in the RAF in London, and his mother in Chelmsford. He told his father that he was now learning to ride a pony, and that it was 28 degrees below freezing in Winnipeg that day.



In 1997, John was thrilled to receive an invitation to the 75th Anniversary Celebrations of the Grosvenor School in Winnipeg, where he had been a pupil from 1940-45. Unfortunately he was not able to attend the reunion, but wrote to the Principal with memories of his time at the school. To his great surprise, a couple of months later, the postman delivered a giant brown envelope with a Canadian stamp. One of the teachers at the Grosvenor had read his letter to her Grade 6 class, the same Grade the ten-year-old John had entered on arrival in Winnipeg. This resulted in twenty-two letters from the girls and boys, commenting on the experiences he had written about, updating him on changes to the school and the town since 1945, and telling something of their own lives. Some of the letters were handwritten, some neatly printed with sophisticated computer graphics. The class was a mixed and interesting bunch, including a young girl newly arrived from Ghana, who was having to get used to snow for the first time. Several pupils confided that John's letter "made our teacher cry both times she read it to us". John himself was clearly moved by the Canadian children's letters, as he then wrote 22 individual replies!

Wartime in Chelmsford: more from Brian Emmett

Here, as promised in the Summer issue, are extracts from the detailed six-page 'essay' Brian Emmett wrote to follow up earlier recollection of his schooldays at Moulsham Juniors, 1938-42.

"I remember we listened to the radio or 'wireless' as we called it, to the various government announcements as to what we should do to prepare for war. This was on a rented set from Christy Bros in Broomfield Road who operated a "Relay" service by way of overhead cables throughout the town. (Nothing new in "cable" communications!). On this we could get the BBC Home and Light programmes. On the Home service you would get the news, plays, classical music etc., also Children's Hour with Uncle Mac and "Larry the Lamb". On the Light you could listen to Music While You Work, comedy shows with the likes of Arthur Askey, Tommy Handley, Jack Warner, "Gert and Daisy", Elsie and Doris Waters etc. plus big band music and Desert Island Discs (still going today). We also had a battery operated set on which we could tune into Radio Luxemburg and Lord "Haw Haw" with his "Germany Calling" propaganda programme, which everybody treated as a joke.

I remember frames and thick curtains being made for "black out" and our window frames criss-crossed with adhesive tape. We were issued with identity cards, gas masks and ration books. Although we were rationed, I can never really remember going hungry. Wives and mothers did marvellous things. As my mother was Assistant Cook at Moulsham Seniors (from 1940-46) she was able to bring home small portions of 'leftovers'.

I don't think bread and flour were rationed. There were a number of bakers that served the town. Sheads, Budds, Woods, Ponys and the Co-op. Bread was a staple part of our diet and we had it with homemade jam, condensed milk, dripping and Marmite. There was bread and milk, bread pudding, dip-in egg soldiers and of course toast. We were registered for our groceries with the Co-op where they still have a store in Moulsham Street opposite the 'Regent' (Chicago Rock Café). There appeared to be no shortage of milk and again there were a number of dairies. I remember the Creamline, Express, Frenches and the Co-op. Bread and milk were delivered by horse and cart.

I kept rabbits at the top of the garden and they were either eaten at Christmas or sold to the butcher. Gardens were all down to growing vegetables and we even grew potatoes in the front garden. The west side of the ground at Moulsham Senior Boys was also ploughed over and turned into plots. Groups of boys from the three classes of their last year were allotted a plot, which they dug, planted, kept tidy and harvested the produce, which went to the school kitchen. The kitchen served both girls and boys senior pupils as we were segregated in those days, with the girls having first sitting. The boys didn't mind this, as it was very often possible to get 'seconds' at the later sitting.

Sweets were rationed and even if you had any coupons there were few about. Sometimes we would suck 'Rennies' or Horlick tablets as alternatives. In my last year when I had a little money of my own, my friend and I would cycle down to the 'British Restaurant' at dinner times, where you could get a basic dinner and a small desert for 9d (4 ½ p). This restaurant was located in Moulsham Street, on the right hand side of what is now the Peugeot car dealers, opposite my old infant school, St Johns.

During the last two years of the war 1943-45, the quality of life gradually improved. Although basic foods were still strictly rationed, canned Australian Apricot Jam and 'Smash' potato powder became available. Also American tins of Spam, which was served in a variety of ways. Sweets you could also obtain, if 'Mum' had any points to spare. There was an influx of American servicemen into the town from their bases at Boreham, Willingale and Wethersfield. All the boys were going about quoting the phrase "Got any Gum Chum?"

Adrian Smith, musician, school play enthusiast and novelist

At the end of June, we contributed some photos and information about Moulsham Juniors to the excellent "Historic Moulsham" exhibition organised by St John's Church, Moulsham. One of the many visitors, Adrian Smith, saw himself on a photo in the exhibition, and got in touch with us. He writes: "I attended Mousham Infants from 1946-48 and went on to the Junior Boys (1948-52). I then went away to boarding school, and lost touch with friends from those days. However, by one of those quirks of fate no-one can predict, I have come back to live in Chelmsford in recent years, and would be interested in hearing news of people I may remember from so long ago." On receiving copies of the two latest Newsletters, he responded with a very long and interesting letter full of memories and observations, including the following:

In Standards IA, III and IV (I moved directly from IA to III), I was taught successively by Mrs Moses, Mr Burt and Mr Hodgson, all of whom I liked immensely. Mr Hymas had IVA, the "Scholarship Class", and I'm sorry to say we did not get on. He had 52 boys to teach, and with pressure to gain as many Grammar School places as possible, he needed to give his attention to the marginal boys who might get a place with coaching. I had too little to do, played up and got into trouble. I won the Ann Johnson Award in 1952, but did not feel Mr Hymas was glad about that at all!

Some boys in my class: Brian Howard, Geoffrey Lodge, Michael Roper, John Langton, Anthony Smith, Peter Eve, Martin Squires, Alan Young. Brian went to Brentwood School and I saw him in the holidays for some years, as he lived opposite me in Galleywood Road. Alan Young moved to Maidstone and I met him by chance some years afterwards. Another schoolmate, John Elsley, and I went together from Moulsham to a boarding school in Saffron Walden, where I took with delight to the new subjects we learned there - French, chemistry, woodwork - I was more than ready for them. The experience of boarding school was like living on another planet. I regret that in my day Moulsham was segregated. Small boys can be such male chauvinists, and it seems a pity to reinforce this.

Mr Petchey had a terrifying reputation, but in time I recognised that he was always fair, and never vindictive. Special occasions such as Harvest Festival he conducted with a moving dignity, as he was a lay preacher in the Congregational Church. He blew in on the occasional lesson, to get to know his pupils, and I remember him telling us the story of "Pilgrim's Progress". I was in the Christmas plays all four years, in the final one as a medieval queen in a steeple hennin, which during the performance kept slipping backwards off my head. I managed to rescue it each time, while continuing to deliver my lines. This so amused Mr Petchey that he always reminded me of it when we met in later years at Christian Aid lunches, when I returned to visit my parents in Chelmsford.

Once a week in Standard 1A, Mrs Moses withdrew and we were taken by Mr Ellis, a capable young teacher who was soon promoted to a headship, I believe at Sible Hedingham. He took us for Hygiene. We drew careful diagrams of skin structure and teeth, and even the digestive system. "Next week", I thought, "we shall learn how babies are made". I was not being prurient - I had a young sister born a few months earlier (Juliet Braithwaite, nee Smith, in Miss Pettet's school 1956-60). But the Hygiene lessons came to an abrupt end without me being enlightened on this mysterious subject, and so far as I was concerned, the chance of a lifetime had been lost.

I got to know Mr Picken in my last year, when I was Captain of Brown House, for which he was responsible. Normally the House Captain would be centre forward in the football team. I was useless at team games, but made a good impression by turning up to encourage my men from the touchline. The only member of the team I recall was the goalie, a boy with pink cheeks and fair hair called Sweeting.

School plays and music were an important part of my childhood Christmas. I remember running through the snow to collect more chairs from the Senior School before the concert, in the grey winter twilight. We brought our teas to school. I was one of a group chosen to go to the Senior Girls' School one morning to watch Theatre in the Round; that must have been just before Christmas too, as when the troupe were late arriving, there was a community singsong, and for the first time I heard that lovely carol "It came upon the midnight clear", which has words and tune which go so well together.

Mr Gardiner was in charge of music. He played the piano for the school song, and when it got to its climax:

'Moulsham forever, and Moulsham again
Resound till the rafters ring!'

I felt terrified: he was an elderly man and got so worked up I was afraid he would have a heart attack and die before our eyes; or that the stage might give way under the strain and the piano disappear from view with Daddy G still pounding the keys! In fact he lived to be ninety. There was no part singing, but we did sing rounds, notably Hilton's "Come follow, follow", which could be heard all over the school. One boy, Bradshaw, whom I thought stuck-up because he could sing better than anyone else, performed "Bless this house" at a Christmas concert, to the hushed assembly of mums and dads. There were descant recorders, playing endlessly a tune called "Forfans jig", which I can still hear in my head now. Alan Young brought his violin to school and sawed away at Corelli right under my nose, propping his music in the lunch hour on top of the vaulting horse in the lobby. Having heard Corelli at such close range has given that composer a special place in my scheme of things!

Maybe someone can supply some information. When playing "He on the lines" in the playground at Moulsham, we used to hold up two crossed fingers and say "Squits" to show we were temporarily out of the game, for example when a shoelace came undone or we needed to attend to a runny nose. This is not one of the 'truce terms' mentioned by the Opies in their great book "The lore and language of Schoolchildren", and I have heard other words used in other areas of England. What did you say?

I did well enough at secondary school to win a place at Kings College Cambridge - I had from early childhood admired the musical tradition there. I have since led a colourful life, and can claim to have got into print - first in the Moulsham school magazine with an account of a visit to Corfe Castle, and in 1987 with a novel called "Coldharbour", which explores the way in which young people can be drawn into crime. It is set in the West Country, where I was living at the time, and aims at social realism. My hopes that the book might be televised, or better still, banned, did not materialise. My brother Roger (at Moulsham 1952-56 and friends with Michael Pierce, a choirboy at Chelmsford Cathedral) has done very much better. He was a lecturer at Lancaster University for nearly thirty years, and has now married again and gone to live in Russia.

Mr Gardiner: a long life at Moulsham and afterwards

Thank you to Ken Turton for sending a photo and newspaper cutting about Mr Gardiner's diamond wedding celebrations in 1980. We will laminate them for display at the next Open Afternoon. Some interesting background information from the cutting: Mr Gardiner came to Chelmsford in 1924 when appointed to the staff of St John's School, Moulsham Street. He transferred to the new Moulsham Junior Boys' School in 1938, where he worked until he retired, aged 70, in 1959. His wife Amelia was also a musician - a singer. They met when he was asked to accompany her at a concert, and they married in 1920. Mr Gardiner was organist and choirmaster at St Mary's Church, Widford for 36 years, and lived in Writtle.

Songs and stories at the Junior Girls, 1951-55, by Kathleen Boot

I read a newspaper feature recently by a woman reflecting on fashions in children's stories, in which she acknowledged how Philippa Pearce's haunting story 'Tom's midnight garden' had become a lasting part of her consciousness. I still find children's stories compelling, and am busy catching up with more recent authors - David Almond, Philip Pullman, and the Harry Potter volumes, of course! But for me too, the songs and stories from my schooldays seem to have taken especially deep root, and give a particular colour to my memories of Moulsham Juniors.

I remember being spellbound by the story of Heidi, which we read in class in our third or fourth year. Living up a mountain on bread and cheese seemed an amazingly desirable lifestyle. And how my imagination was fired by acting out the ballad of Sir Patrick Spens - "To Noraway, to Noraway, to Noraway o'er the foam; The King's daughter o' Noraway, 'tis thou must bring her home!" Small wonder, that, for years afterwards, the two parts of Europe I most desired to visit were the Alps and Scandinavia (and the reality of both lived up to the images I had pictured).

Singing was a major part of life at Moulsham - we always seemed to win the Essex School Choirs competition, no doubt because of the hours of practice we put in with Miss (Skinny) Skilton. I loved learning the words and tunes. Only later did I find out that in many cases the songs were Shakespeare or other poems put to music: 'Ye spotted snakes with double tongue', from A Midsummer Night's Dream', or the song from Love's Labours Lost, which I always thought of as the 'Mox-married men' song, assuming that 'mox-married' was simply an adjective I hadn't come across before. It went

When daisies pink and violets blue
And lady-smocks all silver white
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue
Do paint the meadows with delight,
The cuckoo then, on every tree
Mocks married men, mocks married men
Mocks married men, for thus sings he
Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo.

To me the words of songs were just magical poetry. I never questioned what they meant!

Two other songs from my Moulsham Junior days have remained especially deep in my memory, appealing to my love of visual imagery. I looked them up recently, and found they too were poems put to music. The first is rather well known, 'Weathers', by Thomas Hardy. Perhaps some of you remember singing it? Part of the first verse runs:

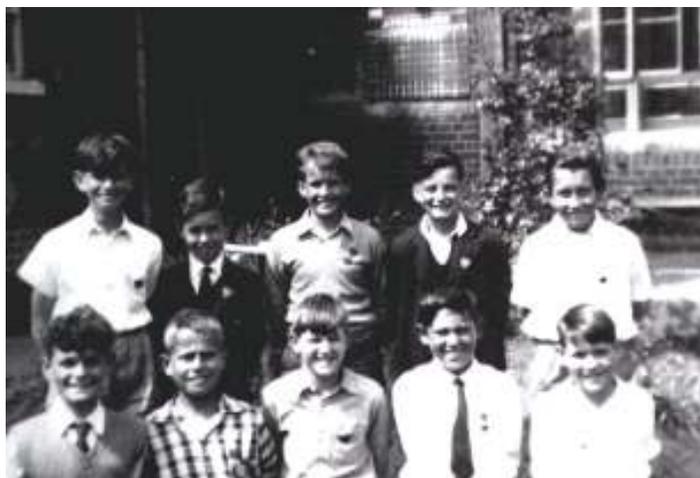
This is the weather the cuckoo likes, /And so do I
When showers betumble the chestnut spikes, /And nestlings fly
And the little brown nightingale bills his best,
And they sit outside at the Traveller's Rest,
And maids come forth, sprig-muslin dressed
And citizens dream of the south and west, / And so do I.

The second, which in those days I took literally as a song about a gypsy's nomadic life, has now a nostalgic edge which was completely missing when we stood in the Girls' Hall, accompanied loudly on the piano by the formidable Miss Skilton. It is a haunting setting of Ralph Hodgson's poem:

Time, you old gypsy man, will you not stay,
Put up your caravan, just for one day?
All things I'll give you, if you'll be my guest
Bells for your jennet, of silver the best.
Time, you old gypsy man, will you not stay
Put up your caravan, just for one day?

Graham and June King: Moulsham in the 1950s

Graham King has sent us copies of five photos from 1957/58 which were originally given to him by Mr W C C Turner (see page 4). This one shows the five House Captains (back row) and their Vice-Captains. We shall display the complete set of photos, with Mr Turner's captions, at the next Open Afternoon.



Back row, from left: G King, G Sparrow, Michael Eyre, G Swift, Paul Brewer
Front row, from left: M Banham, R Murray, D Frost, I Offord, M Bishop

Graham says "it is great fun to read about the 'good old days' in the Newsletters. I started my school life at Moulsham Infants in 1951 and finished just before my 18th birthday in 1964, attending the Junior School from 1954-58. June, my wife, went to Friars Infants and came to Moulsham Juniors during the same period as myself. However, we did not meet or know of each other until we both left school in 1964, marrying in September 1968. Our family, Julia 26 and Matthew 27 grew up in Chelmsford, attending Perryfields and The Boswells School.

Whilst at Moulsham I lived in Moulsham Drive, where Mum still lives, walking along Princes Road in all weathers every day of my school life. June had further to travel to school, from Lower Anchor Street, in her early years often on the back of her mum's bicycle, so I am told!

June has worked and is still working in Local Government, with Essex County Council before the children came along and now with Chelmsford Borough Council. I have also been in Local Government for all my working career as a Building Control Officer with, prior to reorganisation Chelmsford Rural District Council and since 1974 with the re-formed Chelmsford Borough Council. Out of interest, I am now inspecting on behalf of the Borough Council the refurbishment of both the verandas at the Infants and Junior Schools. Returning to the schools was a step back in time and prompted me to hunt out these photos of my final year at the Juniors. On them you can see the 'old' veranda with the oak posts and wired glass roof. I have fond memories of the attendance board and the bell seen on the photograph. If you were 'naughty' you were sent to 'stand under the board' and await the Headmaster's punishment! As a prefect you had the responsible task of ringing the bell to indicate the start and end of lessons. I am sure I could still hear echoes of a teacher or two shouting "No running on the veranda" when I was visiting the school recently. The other memory I have of the famous bell, is that when I was Bell Monitor and ringing the end of a lesson, the bell fell off its hook and crashed on to my shoulder, luckily missing my head, although some people would have said not!! Anyway I survived."

Anne Waters - Class of 1964

Thank you to Anne Waters for sending this photo of the top class at Moulsham Junior Girls' School in 1964, reprinted with kind permission from the Essex Weekly News. The picture was taken on return from the class trip to Stratford-upon-Avon (see below).



Back row from left: Elizabeth Williams, ?Linda?, Melanie Whitehead, Bundy Thompson, Janet Bell, Sandra Halls, Sally Golding, Linda (or Alison?) Hendry, Christine Yallop, Susan Harrison, Susan Willis, Gillian Norton, Ann Deighton?, Hannelore Mawby?, ?, Gail Whetnall, Christine Martin, Janice Grant, Vivienne Noone, Margaret Prah, Christine Parker, Jackie Butler, Helen Golding.

Front row from left: Averil Clark, Beryl Archibald, Susan Turner, Geraldine Butterworth, Mary Norris, Jacqueline du Prez?, Claire Jarman, Linda Pavitt, Linda? Freeman, Jane Watkinson, Pat Hinkins, Jill Hollingsworth, Susan Hawkes, Anne Waters, Julie ?, Kay Smedley.

Anne writes: I was a pupil at Moulsham Girls' from 1963-64. I joined Class 6 (Miss Aldridge's) at around Easter time, our family having moved 'down south' from Blackburn, Lancashire. My parents had warned me that it might be a culture shock, and I suppose in those days we did think of the south as being the 'posh' part of England. I remember at first feeling out of place with my flat northern vowel sounds, which I quickly worked on and honed to a fine 'RP' pronunciation in order to conform! In addition, although I was told that I could keep my 'copperplate style' handwriting, which was much fancier than the comparatively plain style practised at Moulsham, I decided that that, too, had to go if I were to fit in. Lammack School had prepared me by warning me that I would probably be 'streets ahead in English but rather behind in Maths'. Luckily I did not find myself in either situation. Today, of course, with the National Curriculum in place, I guess the issue of regional differences in syllabuses does not arise.

The most obvious contrast between Lammack (mixed) and Moulsham (single-sex) must have been that at Moulsham Girls' there were no boys and no male teachers. However this didn't seem to bother me at the time! I think the two things that made the biggest impact on me were the outside loo (a real shock to the system!) and the tuckshop. To have a tuckshop was unbelievable. I had never seen one before. Just the word itself took me straight into the pages of an Enid Blyton boarding school story..... Nowadays, sad to say, the wagon wheels and crisps would undoubtedly be replaced by carrots and apples, if the tuckshop still exists (which it probably doesn't!) There was a rota for serving on the tuckshop and I remember if you were on duty you had to be really quick putting everything away otherwise you would be late for the first lesson after play.

Dinnertimes however turned out to be very similar at Moulsham to what I had been used to. The meals were served up on the familiar blue plates with a copper water jug on each table and a squat little Dulex (?) glass to drink it out of. The menus could have been interchangeable between Lammack and Moulsham (with the possible exception of *Lancashire* Hotpot). The mouth-watering selection included braised heart, mutton stew and cheese 'salad' (you can picture it: dark green lettuce leaves, beetroot, grey-tinted hard-boiled egg and floury cold potatoes with some cheese grated on the top) with the ubiquitous semolina pudding or custard and prunes to follow. I can still summon up the disgusting smell of the slop basin. I felt sorry for the pigs having to eat prune stones. How lucky the Moulsham children are today with their 'Pick-and-Mix' menu which sounds far more appealing! There were two dinner ladies, Mrs Rainbird and another lady whose name I can't remember. The latter wore glasses and was very strict. We didn't dare to cross her. We once pulled faces at her behind her back but she told us she could see us doing so from the reflection in her glasses. We didn't do it again!

While I have difficulty recalling all the children in the class I left behind in Lancashire, I can still remember most of the characters in my Moulsham class. In Class 8 I envied Claire Jarman, whose job it was to ring the bell (in those days, a real hand-held bell which she took outside onto the quad area and clanged with great gusto). I thought this was a really big responsibility! For some time I sat next to Christine Parker who spent all her time drawing pictures of horses (very good ones, too!). She now has a horse of her own... Janice Grant was the brains of the class. I once sat next to her, too, and felt quite intimidated.

As at Lammack School, we had Singing Together at Moulsham with the radio on the classroom wall and sometimes Music and Movement with the radio in the Hall. Also in the Hall, Miss Mutton sometimes took us for PE or country dancing but, unlike my previous school, half the girls had to dance the boys' parts which always felt rather unnatural. Wet playtimes in the Hall were like a rugby scrum with everyone trying to get the 'spillikins' ('pick-up-sticks') - a game which I still enjoy playing with my children! On Friday afternoons in Class 8 just after lunch we had a boring schools programme on the radio about the high plains of Hungary or the 'Steppes' of Russia (that particular name sent the imagination running wild as we could only hear the name and not see the spelling!) However, I had no idea where the plains of Hungary and the Steppes of Russia really were, and so from the outset could not really cope, and went off into a dreamworld of my own.

At Lammack our only trips had been the weekly one to the Victorian baths (for swimming lessons, not washing!) and a one-off visit to a wallpaper factory. However, in Class 8 Moulsham there were two big trips. The first was the famous holiday in Stratford-on-Avon which Sue Hawkes and Sally Golding have already mentioned in previous Newsletters. 1964 was the four-hundredth anniversary of Shakespeare's birth and a set of stamps was issued to commemorate it (and in those days only Very Important Events were marked in this way!) The visit certainly was for me a landmark in my primary education. It was Mrs Alty's incredible enthusiasm that fired us all up. I found Stratford and all the places we visited there absolutely magical (and can still quote several chunks of Richard II !) I think the total cost for the trip was £24. Each Monday for twelve weeks before we had to take in £2, which was recorded in red biro on a small piece of card the shape of a bookmark. I still have mine (but have sadly lost the diary we had to write afterwards, which would have been far more interesting!)

The second excursion was at the end of the year when we went by coach to a huge park and also visited the sea. I've no idea where it was but have a set of photos of Christine Yallop, Sue Hawkes, Melanie Whitehead, Sandra Halls (sp?) and Christine Martin in the park place and one of Helen Golding paddling with her school dress tucked into her knickers. It must have been somewhere on the Essex/Suffolk coast.

If there is anyone from that class who wishes to share memories, please contact Anne Waters on: brefjni@ogallagher.freemove.co.uk or at : 75 Ilkley Hall Park, ILKLEY, W Yorks LS29 9LD.

Music, Archaeology and Science - more recollections from Barrie Stevens (1959-63)

The school then, like all schools, had a particular atmosphere; an atmosphere of chalk dust, milk, stale plimsolls, unwashed navy blue shorts, the disinfectant soaked sand used nightly on the parquet floor by the cleaners, ink, the distant odour of boiled cabbage and our own cheap pungent sweets! The exception was the lobby entrance housing the Head Teachers' offices and administration area, which had an atmosphere similar to that of a Police Station! You only went there when there was trouble!

A Mr King taught music, and in my first week I was one of a group sat in front of a music stand with Brian Plummer, my first friend at this new school, and required to play. Others had a variety of instruments such as recorders, cymbals, tambourines and "clappers". What is a clapper? It is an ebony handle holding two pieces of hard wood linked together on a string and which clap up and down when shaken to music - assuming you can read the score that is! I protested that I could not read music. Even better, at that time I could not even do joined up writing! I was told, "You can play a triangle". I just hit the instrument when I guessed it was right to do so.....I was always wrong and even now have little interest in music and possess no records CD's or tapes. I had become frightened of music lessons. The child is father to the man.....!

I ran the class museum, located on three wooden shelves behind Mr Picken's desk and comprised largely of items thrown out by Chelmsford and Essex Museum, such as mosaic from Roman Carthage, a sixteenth century horseshoe and some Roman bronze bangles as well as Roman pottery shards from the "Old Moulsham" area. The local farmer Currie, on whose land some of the school is now built, farmed a curiously isolated field under what is now the college of Further Education in Moulsham Street. This in turn had been a Roman cemetery dating from the Boadicea revolt and one Moulsham boy from Rothesay Avenue had amassed quite a collection of Roman items. I was also the first Curator of the Junior Museum Club at Oaklands Park when Mr John Woodward was Assistant Curator. He was a steam buff and went on to run the railway museum at Swindon.

Computers and "IT" are now standard but we had our gadgets as well. Electric shock machines and lessons on simple wiring for such as bells and lights on battery powered circuits were then "science". In Mr Picken's class there was a modern aid to teaching the "times table"; this being a board and writing loom on which one contact touched the question ie "12 x 12" and if you then connected with "144" the lights came on and a bell rang! Marconi's, c/o John Sanderson, helped this project far more than was admitted!

I brought to school a then recent Christmas present, a plastic moulded "Junior Scientist" microscope kit bought for 25s or £1.25 from Alfie Cohen of Westcliff who for years had a popular stall in the old retail market. About a year ago I saw exactly the same microscope and instruments for sale in the present Chelmsford retail market.

I entered Moulsham unable to write legibly and even now my handwriting is atrocious despite the "copper plate" teaching techniques. The calculator, word processor, spell-check and ink-jet printer I welcome as an advance. "IT" is now a necessity and to be "non-computer literate" is to wear the "dunce's cap." Weighed against this is the everlasting "times table." It is something you never completely forget and automatically use without even being conscious of doing mental arithmetic; and this simply achieved through having been programmed via the repetitive efforts of legions of chanting school teachers. Moulsham Juniors, with its erstwhile 1960s electrically operated "times table" teaching aid, represented an effort to be every bit as up to date in its time as any contemporary "IT" suite but with the further advantage that such "software", once effectively installed in the mind, did not require regular upgrade. This being said, I must confess to a precautionary checking of "12 x 12" on the PC just in case a past "Sir" or "Miss" might be even now critically marking my work!

News in brief

Lynne Burnand (nee Brown), 1965-69, emailed us in July to say: "I have just finished reading the Summer 2001 Newsletter with great interest. I have been receiving the Newsletter for a year now and read it from cover to cover. Although I was at Moulsham Junior School in the late sixties, I still recognise teachers' names and the games etc that the children played. I went to all three Moulsham Schools with my brother Peter. In my final year the playground went mixed and caused great excitement. The classes were still separate, though. My final year teacher was Mrs Taylor. My favourite was Miss Cook.

I was saddened to hear of Mr Picken's death, as I know my brother was in his class and he thought he was brilliant. I look forward to the day when more past pupils from the 60's start writing in. [Note: about a week after this e-mail we were delighted to receive the article from **Anne Waters** -see page 10 - another 1960s pupil. More news and memories from that period always welcome, of course]

Peter Smith, 1938, was also pleased with the Summer Newsletter, and writes: What really impressed me was the letter from Sapper Picken. I calculate him to have been about twenty-eight when that was written and find it quite amazing that someone so young could have written with almost Churchillesque passion to the boys of a school he had only joined three years before. It is not difficult to see why he remained such a popular teacher." Peter has kindly sent a photo, given him by **John Reed**, of Mr Picken and some former pupils taken at the 50th Anniversary of the School. We shall put it on show at the 2002 Open Afternoon. Many thanks to Peter also for putting us in touch with four more past pupils: **Keith Lodge, Ivan Brown, Magnus Anderson and Geoff Caton**.

The first of these, **Keith Lodge**, wonders where all the time has gone, as "it seems like yesterday that I was walking through Oaklands Park to school. Peter Smith and I have kept in touch all these years, though only through Christmas cards. Incidentally, John Whittle and I were neighbours living a few doors from each other at Upper Bridge Road. I remember him well, and his cousin who lived in Writtle".

In the Summer Newsletter, **Joan Atkins** asked if anyone remembered the lovely hymn sung as a solo by Dawn Digby at each Harvest festival. **Pauline Digby (nee Knight)** wonders if it might be the following, entitled Thanksgiving:

Pleasure it is to hear ewiss the birdies sing,
The deer in the dale, the sheep in the vale,
The birds singing, the birds singing,
God's purveyance for sustenance, it is for man,
Then we always to Him give praise, to Him give praise,
And thank Him then, and thank Him then, and thank Him then.

Pauline used to sing this as a solo herself, as did a girl called Jacky Johns, who, she thinks, was evacuated during the war from London with her family.

Pauline has also sent copies of some beautifully neat work from her schoolbooks in 1942-43, when she would have been aged 8. We will display these at the next Open Afternoon. They include a writing exercise (a poem called The Little Land), a faultless spelling test with words such as 'beautiful', 'cupboard', 'chimney' and 'enough', and some fiendishly complicated pounds, shillings and pence sums with answers like "2s.8 $\frac{3}{4}$ d, remainder one farthing". How simple decimalisation now seems, despite the initial trauma of changing over!

Derek Wiseman, known as "Gaffer" to most, only attended the Junior School for one year - its inaugural year - and was in Mr Hymas' class before moving up the road and then on to the "Tech". However, many names in the Newsletter are familiar from later years. He reveals that the nickname was derived from a story called "Gaffer Wiseman's Choice", read out by a teacher called Mr Goodwin

at Trinity Road School (a lovely man and most popular with everyone). Like many others of our readers, Derek transferred from Trinity Road to the new Moulsham School in 1938.

Margaret Haldane (nee Laurence), also mentioned on page 4 as the first recipient of the Turner Award for Good Companionship, lives in Great Baddow, and was pleased to be told about the Newsletter by a former classmate. Margaret was at the Junior Girls' School from 1940-44, when Miss Rankin was Headmistress, and hopes to contribute some of her memories in due course. We look forward very much to that.

Alan Twitchett wrote to say how much he and **Bob Wiffen** (both at the Juniors 1953-57) enjoyed the Open Afternoon in May, and especially liked the activities put on by the children. Alan was also delighted to win £50 in the M2000 Summer Prize Draw, as he says he seldom wins anything like that!

Mrs B Bilic missed out on Moulsham Juniors: "I left Trinity Road Junior School to start Moulsham Seniors when it opened in 1938, having been there part of the wartime which I found so exciting, without realising how worrying it must have been for the parents". But she always finds the Newsletter interesting. "Maybe it is because to reminisce brings back those happy childhood days' plus recognising friends after so many years, resulting in having so much to talk about". We were pleased to see Mrs Bilic on 19th May, where she was able to meet friends from the Junior Girls' School who had followed her "up the road" to the Seniors.

Another contact from foreign parts, this time from **Trina Moule (nee Shuring)**, who now lives in Tasmania. Trina e-mailed to say what a surprise it was to receive copies of the Newsletter (dropped off by a friend of Kathleen Boot's who visited this Spring and turned out to live in the same town in Tasmania!) She writes: "My sister, Penny Shuring, and I both attended Moulsham, as infants and juniors, and our parents taught at the Moulsham Seniors. I was there at the same time as Helen Roberts (Juniors from 1952-56) and my sister was two years behind. My parents moved to Suffolk about 1990 and I have hardly been back to the Chelmsford area since. I went from Moulsham to the High School, and then to Liverpool Uni in 1963. I moved to work at the National Vegetable Research Station in Warwickshire after I graduated. In 1972 I emigrated to Australia with my first husband and became a librarian in Sydney. We split up and I moved to Burnie to a job with State Library of Tasmania in 1975. I really put down roots in this area and I retired from the Burnie Library in January this year.

We bumped into Harold Picken while on a visit to friends in Chelmsford shortly before my father died, September 1999, it must have been. I remember many of the Moulsham staff, and have had news of them through my parents. I look forward to more news and memories."

Kathleen Boot attended the Chelmsford High School Old Girls' Reunion on 14 July this year (the first time she had set foot in her old grammar school since leaving in summer 1963!), and was delighted to find some past pupils of Moulsham Junior Girls' among those attending. New contacts from that occasion include **Muriel Sampson (nee Passmore)** 1939-44, her sister **Renee Gulliver (nee Passmore)** 1939-40, **Sandra Thomas (nee Thomas, having married another Thomas)** 1949-53, and **Mrs Lesley Mann**, a teacher at Moulsham Juniors from 1984-91. We welcome them all to our mailing list, and hope they may like to write something for a future newsletter.

And finally, news of forthcoming **Caprice Wind Ensemble** concerts, organised by **Joy Bome (nee Sparrow)**. Do come along to one or more:

20 October, 7.30pm, Twinning Concert, Chelmsford Cathedral, £6 (proceeds to Mayor's Charity)

8 December, 7.15pm, Hospice Nowell, Christ Church, New London Road (for Farleigh Hospice)

15 December, 7.30pm, concert with Chelmsford Singers, Cathedral (in aid of Mencap and Home Farm Trust) Tickets for all concerts available from Daces, Moulsham Street.